What is claimed is:

1   1.   A network architecture comprising:

2   a storage system including a plurality of storage

3   devices;

4   a plurality of host computers, each host computer

5   transmitting data to and retrieving data from one or more of

6   the plurality of storage devices;

7   a plurality of clients; and

8   a storage management server connected between the

9   plurality of clients and the plurality of storage devices,

10   the storage management server providing information relating

11   to the operation status of the storage devices to at least

12   on of the clients.

1   2.   The network architecture of claim 1 wherein the

2   storage management server includes:

3   a poller for gathering the information relating to

4   the operation status of the storage device; and

5   a central repository for storing the information

6   relating to the operation status of said one of the storage

7   devices; and

8   an object server for distributing the information

9   relating to the operation status of the storage devices to

10   the clients.

1   3.   The network architecture of claim 1 wherein the

2   poller polls each of the storage devices at predetermined

3   intervals to maintain the current status of the operation of

4   each of the storage devices.

1   4.   The network architecture of claim 3 wherein the

2   predetermined interval is less than or equal to one minute.

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5.   The network architecture of claim 1 wherein the storage management server further provides information relating to the operation status of storage connectivity devices which connect storage devices to the clients.

6.   The network architecture of claim 5 wherein the storage management server includes:
        a poller for gathering the information relating to the operation status of the storage device and storage connectivity devices; and
        a central repository for storing the information relating to the operation status of said one of the storage devices and storage connectivity devices; and
        an object server for distributing the information relating to the operation status of the storage devices and storage connectivity devices to the clients.

7.   The network architecture of claim 6 wherein the poller polls each of the storage connectivity devices at predetermined intervals to maintain the current status of the operation of each of the storage connectivity devices.

8.   The network architecture of claim 1 wherein the storage management server further includes a security component for limiting access by a client to one or more of the storage devices.

9.   The network architecture of claim 1 wherein the storage management server further includes a web server for communicating with the plurality of clients.

10. The network architecture of claim 1 wherein each of the clients includes a graphical user interface for displaying the information relating to the operation status of the storage devices.

11. The network architecture of claim 1 wherein the plurality of host computers are of different types.

12. The network architecture of claim 1 wherein the plurality of storage devices are of different types.

13. The network architecture of claim 1 further comprising a plurality of storage management servers connected between the host computers and the plurality of clients, each storage management server, providing information relating to the operation status of said one of the storage devices to at least one of the clients.

14. The network architecture of claim 1 wherein each of the storage management servers includes:
a poller for gathering the information relating to the operation status of the storage device; and
a central repository for storing the information relating to the operation status of said one of the storage devices; and
an object server for distributing the information relating to the operation status of said one of the storage devices to at least one of the clients.

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1   15.   The network architecture of claim 14 further
2 comprising a name server, connected to each of the plurality
3 of storage management servers, to determine which of the
4 central repositories of the plurality of storage management
5 servers includes the information relating to the operation
6 status of said one of the storage devices.

1   16. A method of managing a storage system including
2 a plurality of storage devices, the storage system
3 communicating data to and from a plurality of host
4 computers, the method comprising:
5   providing a storage management server between a
6 plurality of clients and the plurality of storage devices;
7   collect, from the storage management server,
8 information relating to the configuration of the storage
9 system; and
10   providing by the storage management server, the
11 information to at least one of the clients.

1   17. The method of claim 16 wherein providing
2 information relating to the operation status of the storage
3 devices includes using a poller to gather the information
4 relating to the operation status of the storage device, the
5 method further comprising storing the information relating
6 to the operation status of said one of the storage devices
7 in a central repository of the storage management server.

1   18. The method of claim 16 wherein providing
2 information relating to the operation status of the storage
3 devices includes using an object server to distribute the
4 information relating to the operation status of the storage
5 devices to the clients.

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1   19.   The method of claim 16 wherein the poller polls
2   each of the storage devices at predetermined intervals to
3   maintain the current status of the operation of each of the
4   storage devices.

1   20.   The method of claim 16 further comprising
2   providing information relating to the operation status of
3   storage connectivity devices which connect the hosts to the
4   storage devices.